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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KIEV 000382

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PBTS](#) [KDEM](#) [PINR](#) [YI](#) [UP](#) [UNMIK](#) [OSCE](#)

SUBJECT: UKRAINE: FM TARASYUK WARNS KOSOVO INDEPENDENCE  
DESTABILIZING, FANS SEPARATIST FLAMES ELSEWHERE

REF: KIEV 336

Classified By: Ambassador for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

1. (C) Summary: Foreign Minister Borys Tarasyuk said, during a January 30 meeting with visiting Project for Transitional Democracies Head Bruce Jackson and Ambassador, that the Ukrainian government did not favor Kosovo independence. Such an outcome would destabilize the political situation in Serbia and Montenegro and act as a bad precedent for Transnistria and fuel other separatist sentiments in the "frozen conflicts" of the Caucasus. Jackson responded that the international community could not "force the victims of ethnic cleansing to return to Belgrade's control." He said that Kosovo's independence was a given, although it might be achieved in a gradual manner. End summary.

#### A Useful Visit

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2. (C) Tarasyuk, Second Territorial Department Deputy Director Ihor Prokopchuk, and other MFA officials met January 30 with Jackson, Ambassador, and Poloff (notetaker) principally to discuss Ukraine's progress toward NATO and EU membership. Tarasyuk also raised his visit to Kosovo and to Serbia and Montenegro. During a January 24 visit to Kosovo, Tarasyuk said, he had met with representatives of the ethnic Albanian and Serbian communities and the UNMIK leadership. He also visited locations where Ukrainian troops were deployed and met with the U.S. general commanding the U.S. brigade. All his interlocutors were quite positive about the Ukrainian contribution (per Tarasyuk, 262 troops with KFOR and 170 policemen with UNMIK). From Kosovo, Tarasuk noted, he had proceeded to Belgrade, where he met with the SaM President, Prime Minister, and Foreign Minister.

#### Kosovo Independence? Don't Go There!

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3. (C) Tarasyuk said his meetings in Belgrade provided him with a better understanding of the Serbian position on Kosovo independence, which Tarasyuk said would only grant Kosovo a status "more than autonomy, but less than full independence." Belgrade was facing a referendum in Montenegro, which Tarasyuk said would probably lead to Montenegro's separation from its union with Serbia. If Serbia were also to lose Kosovo, the SaM government's opponents would seize on the developments to undermine the government; thus, the loss of Kosovo would be a serious blow domestically. Tarasyuk's interlocutors in Belgrade had advised Tarasyuk that they could not accept Kosovo independence because it would upset the existing balance of political forces in Serbia and Montenegro.

4. (C) Furthermore, Tarasyuk continued, in addition to the destabilizing impact on Serbia domestically, Kosovo independence would reinforce separatist sentiments in the so-called "frozen conflicts" in places such as Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh. Transnistria affected Ukraine directly, while the other conflicts would have impacts in Georgia and Azerbaijan, countries with whom Ukraine enjoyed friendly relations. Kosovo independence could also influence the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina negatively, Tarashuk warned. Who could say whether the Albanians would stop at the formation of an ethnically Albanian state just with Kosovo?, Tarasyuk asked rhetorically. For these reasons, Tarasyuk concluded, the Ukrainian government was not enthusiastic about the prospect of Kosovo's independence.

#### An Out-of-Step Ukraine

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5. (C) Jackson responded that the presence of ethnic Hungarians outside of Hungary, or ethnic Romanians outside of Romania, did not mean national boundaries must be adjusted to create ethnically uniform countries. Geopolitical realities dictated that Kosovo would be independent. The Serbians could not be allowed to argue that they were so weak and politically unstable that nothing could happen in the Balkans, Jackson retorted with some heat, and the international community should not force the victims of ethnic cleansing to return to Belgrade's control. Jackson allowed that there could be some long-term process, but he frankly could not see any outcome other than independence for

Kosovo. He did not think the issue was a matter of debate any longer. The Ukrainian position was completely out-of-step with the U.S. and Western European perspective, but he could understand that the implications for the frozen conflicts should be carefully considered.

16. (U) Visit Embassy Kiev's classified website:  
[www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/kiev](http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/kiev).  
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